

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 22493 250730Z

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, CB, TH; CGEN

SUBJ: CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN THAILAND

REF: BANGKOK 22360

1. POST REQUESTS AN ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION OF 385 PAROLE NUMBERS FOR CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN THAILAND WHO DO NOT MEET PRESENT GUIDELINES, BUT WHOSE CASES HAVE SPECIAL MERIT. THIS REQUEST IS IN ADDITION TO THE RECOMMENDATION FOR PAROLE AUTHORIZATION FOR 290 CAMBODIANS TRANSMITTED IN REFTEL.

2. FIRST, WE RECOMMEND AN ALLOCATION OF 300 NUMBERS FOR CAMBODIANS FOR WHICH NUMBERS THE JULY 1 CUTOFF FOR ENTRY INTO THAILAND WOULD BE SPECIFICALLY WAIVED. THIS REQUEST PARALLELS THE ONE MADE IN REFTEL FOR 333 VIETNAMESE. WE BELIEVE THAT 300 NUMBERS WOULD PERMIT US TO PAROLE ALL BONA FIDE CATEGORY I AND II CAMBODIAN REFUGEES WHO ENTERED THAILAND AFTER JULY 1 AND ALSO COVER CATEGORY III CASES OF TRULY EXCEPTIONAL MERIT.

3. STATISTICAL BACKGROUND ON CAMBODIAN LATECOMERS. WE DO NOT HAVE ADEQUATE BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON CAMBODIAN REFUGEES ARRIVING AFTER JULY 1, SINCE THIS GROUP HAS BEEN SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDED FROM PAROLE CONSIDERATION. HOWEVER, THE COMBINATION OF INFORMAL UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BANGKO 22493 250730Z

TALKS WITH SUCH REFUGEES AND EXAMINATION OF OUR

OWN RECORDS LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT THE FIGURE OF 300 QUOTED ABOVE IS SUFFICIENT TO COVER CATEGORIES I AND II FOR LATECOMERS. A QUICK SURVEY OF OUR FILES, WHICH CONTAIN INFORMATION ON A MINORITY (PERHAPS 15-20 PERCENT) OF THE LATECOMERS, SHOW 41 PEOPLE WHO WOULD QUALIFY UNDER STRICT CATEGORY I, II, OR III CRITERIA, INCLUDING IMMEDIATE BLOOD RELATIVES, DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONALS, OTHER RELATIVES WITH COMPELLING JUSTIFICATIONS FOR PAROLE, AND PERSONS INTIMATELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OR MISSIONS OR TRAINED IN U.S. SCHOOLS OR INSTALLATIONS. NO CASES OF OVERRIDING HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS OR U.S. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WERE FOUND IN THE SAMPLE SURVEYED.

4. SECOND, WE URGE AN ALLOCATION OF 85 NUMBERS BE FOR THE IMMEDIATE FAMILIES (CATEGORY I) OF CAMBODIANS IN THE U.S. IN NONIMMIGRANT OR VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE STATUS. A FAIRLY THOROUGH (BUT NECESSARILY HASTY) EXAMINATION OF OUR FILES ON 6,000 ODD CAMBODIANS TURNED UP 64 REFUGEES HERE (19 FAMILIES) WHO WOULD DEFINITELY APPEAR TO BELONG IN THIS CATEGORY. THEIR RELATIVES IN THE U.S. ARE MOSTLY COLLEGE STUDENTS, A FEW ARE FORMER MILITARY TRAINEES OR KHMER REPUBLIC OFFICIALS FORMERLY PART OF THE OFFICIAL CAMBODIAN MISSION TO THE U.S., AND ONE IS A BUSINESSMAN WHO ENTERED THE U.S. ON A TOURIST VISA. A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF OTHER REFUGEES HERE, NO MORE THAN 10 OR 15, MIGHT ALSO FALL IN THIS CATEGORY, BUT OUR RECORDS DO NOT CLEARLY SHOW HOW THEY SHOULD BE CLASSIFIED. FROM OUR CORRESPONDENCE, IT APPEARS THAT SOME OF THE U.S. PRINCIPALS ARE ALREADY EMPLOYED AND COULD SUPPORT THEIR REFUGEE RELATIVES IF THE LATTER WERE PAROLED. WE ANTICIPATE INCREASING PRESSURES FROM STATESIDE TO PAROLE REFUGEES IN THIS CATEGORY, SINCE THEIR INELIGIBILITY APPEARS TO ALL CONCERNED TO BE BASED ON A PETTY AND UNFORTUNATE TECHNICALITY WHOSE MAIN RESULT IS TO BAR THE REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES. THE POST HAS ALREADY PROCESSED FOR PAROLE 25 INDIVIDUALS WITH NONIMMIGRANT U.S. RELATIVES AS CASES OF SIGNIFICANT HUMANITARIAN UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BANGKO 22493 250730Z

MERIT. NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS HAVE PREVENTED US FROM PAROLING THIS CATEGORY AS A WHOLE.

5. WE WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPLETE PROCESSING OF PEOPLE WITHIN THE CATEGORIES PROPOSED ABOVE BY OCTOBER 31. A PARTICULAR DIFFICULTY IS THE LARGE NUMBER AND INACCESSIBILITY OF MANY CAMBODIAN REFUGEES, WHO ARE SCATTERED IN REMOTE CAMPS AND

TOWNS THROUGHOUT THAILAND OR IN HIDING IN BANGKOK. THESE REFUGEES OFTEN DO MANAGE TO FIND THEIR WAY TO THE EMBASSY TO APPLY FOR PAROLE, BUT NOT ALWAYS COINCIDING WITH THE FAST-PACED SCHEDULES OF VISITING INS OFFICERS OR IN TIME TO MEET THE OCTOBER 31 DEADLINE. AS A RESULT, A TOO-HASTY TERMINATION OF THIS PROGRAM WOULD LEAVE RELATIVES STRANDED HERE WHO QUALIFY IN ALL RESPECTS UNDER EXISTING CRITERIA OR WHO WOULD QUALIFY UNDER THE EXPANDED CRITERIA SUGGESTED HEREIN. IT IS UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT SUCH PEOPLE TO MAKE THEMSELVES AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW DURING A PARTICULAR ABBREVIATED PERIOD OF A FEW WEEKS OR LESS. MANY SUCH PEOPLE, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY HAVE BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE UNDER THE SUCCESSIVELY EXPANDED AND REDEFINED CRITERIA, HAVE PROBABLY STOPPED CONTACTING THE EMBASSY ABOUT THEIR CHANCES SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE GIVEN UP THEIR VERY REAL HOPE TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES, BUT NOT THEIR DESIRE TO DO SO. WE WOULD PREFER TO WORK CAREFULLY AND METHODICALLY TO PROCESS AND CLEAR OUT ALL COMPELLING CASES WHICH STILL REMAIN RATHER THAN TO MAKE A CRASH EFFORT WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY LEAVE LOOSE ENDS WHICH WOULD RESULT IN JUSTIFIED INQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS FROM U.S. RELATIVES, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, SPONSORS, AND CONGRESSMEN AS THOSE LOOSE ENDS BECOME EXPOSED, PERHAPS PAINFULLY, IN THE COMING MONTHS.

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